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## MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOTES

### MEETINGS

The principal business at the meeting of the executive council on March 8, 1915, was the consideration of the proposed new by-laws. The draft reported by the committee on revision at the February meeting was taken up in detail by the council in committee of the whole and a number of amendments were incorporated, after which the new by-laws were formally adopted by the council. The charter and amendments and the by-laws have been printed in pamphlet form and distributed to all members of the society. They are included also in the appendix to the *Eighteenth Biennial Report*.

No formal business was transacted at the stated meeting of the council on April 12, because of the lack of a quorum. The meeting was thrown open to the public, and an audience of about thirty listened to the paper by Mr. Kellar which is printed in this number of the BULLETIN.

At a called meeting of the executive council, held on April 29, three resolutions were adopted. The first of these authorized and directed the executive committee to purchase and convey to the state the "Lamprey property, being known as lot number 3 in block number 1 of Central Park addition to the city of St. Paul, at a price not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars cash, or securities satisfactory to the owner in an equivalent amount, to be used as a site for the building to be erected for this society." The second resolution authorized and directed the executive committee "to represent and act for the society and the executive council before the board of control, governor of the state, and other state authorities, and in all other respects and matters pertaining to the construction and erection of the building for the society, its equipment and furnishing and plans and specifications therefor." Still another resolution adopted at this meeting defined in a comprehensive way the duties and powers of the executive committee under the new by-laws.

## BUILDING PROGRESS

On April 16, 1915, the Governor signed an act amending the historical society building act of 1913, which removed all difficulties in the way of prompt construction of a building for the society. The original act with the amendments effected by this act incorporated is printed in the appendix to the *Eighteenth Biennial Report*. The essential changes are: (1) the elimination of the supreme court from the building and the provision for the care of the state archives therein; (2) the crediting of the thirty-five thousand dollars paid by the society for the Merriam site toward its donation of seventy-five thousand dollars and a provision allowing the society to select and purchase another site and receive credit for the amount so expended toward the donation.

Too much credit can not be given to the legislative committee and especially to Messrs. Ives (chairman), Sanborn, and Ingersoll for securing the passage of the measure. Valuable assistance was rendered also by members and friends of the society throughout the state. Hon. F. A. Duxbury of Houston piloted the bill through the senate, the vote being 47 to 2. In the house, a place on a special order was secured through the courtesy of Hon. Elmer E. Adams of Ottertail; the purpose of the bill was explained briefly by Hon. J. B. Sanborn of Ramsey; and it passed by a vote of 78 to 30.

As soon as possible after the bill was approved by the Governor, the executive committee of the society held a joint session with the board of control to consider the question of procedure under the act. Mr. Clarence Johnston, the architect of the board, having reached the conclusion that the so-called Lamprey site would be large enough for the proposed building, the society purchased the site and caused it to be conveyed to the state. This ensures an excellent location on Cedar Street facing the lawn in front of the Capitol and in conformity with the original plan for the development of the capitol approaches. After several conferences between the architect and the executive committee tentative plans were agreed upon, and the architect is now at work upon detailed plans and specifications.

## GIFTS

Many books, pamphlets, circulars, manuscripts, pictures, and museum articles are donated to the society by its members and friends, who realize that they can thus ensure the permanent preservation of the material. Only a few of the more interesting and valuable gifts received during the first four months of 1915 can be noted here.

John Bowe of Canby, Minnesota, presented to the society twenty-two old books, manuscripts, and curios. One of the books is printed in the Coptic language and one in Chinese. Another is a small geography in Spanish, printed at Barcelona in 1889 and used in the schools at Columbit, Philippine Islands, at the beginning of American occupation. Most of the manuscripts are old English documents and several of them are written on parchment. The oldest bears the date of February 15, 1698. Two of the more interesting of the manuscripts are printed elsewhere in this number. Among the curios are a petrified book taken from St. Pierre near Mount Pelée; a piece of featherweight wood from Porto Rico; a piece of white rock from King Solomon's mines, said to be the same material as that used in the Temple of Solomon; alabaster from the mosque of Mohammed Ali at Cairo, and a carved stone from the Dead Sea. Especially interesting is a copy of the issue for July 4, 1899, of *Freedom*, an American newspaper published in Manila. This contains several articles by American soldiers describing experiences in the Philippines, and a playlet entitled "Such is Life in Manila."

Mr. Fred A. Bill of Minneapolis, president of the Read's Landing Association of the Twin Cities, presented to the society thirty-five reproductions on postcards of old pictures of Read's Landing and vicinity; also a copy of a manuscript written for the North Dakota Historical Society on "Steamboating on the Red River of the North." Mrs. Bill presented a copy of the initial number of the *Waumadec Herald* published at Read's Landing with the date of May 9, 1857. The editors of this paper, Joseph and William McMaster, were brothers of Mrs. Bill. The number was not actually issued until May 12 and on the afternoon of that day Joseph McMaster and another brother, Thomas,

were drowned while sailing on the Mississippi. The second number of the paper was issued by Norman E. Stevens, August 15, 1857. This information is gleaned from a manuscript account of the paper and its editors written by Mrs. Bill to accompany the copy presented to the society.

General C. C. Andrews, an honored member of the society, from whom it has received many donations, presented eleven bound volumes of manuscript reports and communications from town fire wardens, rangers, and others, made to the forestry commissioner of Minnesota during the year 1910. He had previously presented a similar set of reports for the years 1895 and 1896 in ten volumes. General Andrews was forest commissioner and chief fire warden from 1895 to 1911; in 1911 he was appointed secretary of the newly organized state forestry board, a position which he still holds.

Seven sacks of government documents were received from Hon. Frederick C. Stevens, member of Congress from 1897 to 1915. Such of these as prove upon examination to be duplicates of volumes already in the library will be turned over to the St. Paul Public Library.

Through the kindness of Adjutant-General Fred B. Wood, the society received from Dr. Brewer Mattocks of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a collection of swords, badges, and medals used or collected by him during the Civil War. Dr. Mattocks was hospital steward of the Second Minnesota Volunteers from June 27, 1861 to June 30, 1863, and assistant surgeon of the Seventh Minnesota Volunteers from June 30, 1863 to August 16, 1865.

The society has received from the Minnesota House of Representatives an engrossed copy, handsomely bound in full leather, of the resolutions adopted by that body, March 10, 1915, on the death of Mrs. Chester G. Higbee. Mrs. Higbee was suddenly stricken in the Capitol on the evening of March 4 at the close of a stirring appeal before the house prison committee, urging the establishment of a woman's reformatory in Minnesota, a project for which she worked earnestly for many years. It was peculiarly fitting that the body before whom Mrs. Higbee had so often

appeared in behalf of delinquent girls and women should authorize the preparation of this memorial volume, "a permanent record of her gentle life and splendid achievements."

Through the courtesy of the Librarian of Congress the society has secured a copy of a very rare pamphlet entitled *Rural Sketches of Minnesota, the El Dorado of the Northwest; Containing Full Descriptions of the Country—its Productions, Villages, State of Society, &c.; Together with a Series of Letters upon Northern Wisconsin, its Appearance, Improvements, &c.; with a Table of Distances*, by H. W. Hamilton (Milan, Ohio, C. Waggoner, printer, Tribune office, 1850. 40 p.). The society already possessed a manuscript copy of portions of this book made by former secretary J. Fletcher Williams from a copy borrowed from the Wisconsin Historical Society for that purpose. When it was discovered a short time ago that there were two copies of the pamphlet in the Library of Congress, a request was made for one of them, and the librarian was kind enough to authorize its transfer on exchange account. The *Rural Sketches* consists of letters written by a young Ohioan who traveled through the region described in August and September of 1850. They tell of the trip from Chicago to Minnesota and contain accounts of St. Paul, St. Anthony Falls, Stillwater, and other villages in the territory. The return trip was made by way of the Mississippi, Wisconsin, and Fox rivers, and the villages along the route are described. Intimate details of social conditions and comments on individuals add spice to the narrative.

Another pamphlet of a similar character, of which a manuscript copy was made by Mr. Williams, is entitled *Minnesota, a Description of the Natural, Political, Mechanical, and Agricultural State of the Country, Presenting Prospects for an Immediate Organization into a New Territorial Government*, by Rev. J. W. Putnam (Galena, W. C. E. Thomas, printer, 1849. 27 p.). Unfortunately the Wisconsin Historical Society copy which was used for this purpose is incomplete, four pages being lacking, and so far no complete copy has been located. The New York State Library had a copy which was destroyed in the fire of 1911. Information which would lead to the location of another copy of this pamphlet would be greatly appreciated. The society should have

a copy in its library, but if one can not be secured, the next best thing would be a complete transcript or photographic reproduction of a copy in some other library.